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ADS Chapter 511 Vital Records Program

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ADS 511 – Vital Records Program

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ADS 511 – Vital Records Program

511.1 OVERVIEW

Effective Date: 12/19/2005

The purpose of the USAID Vital Records Program is to ensure that in the event of an emergency, USAID has in place the appropriate emergency operating records to assist the Continuity of Operations Program (COOP) during the emergency and the necessary rights and interests records to rebuild afterwards.

The objectives of the Vital Records Program are

- To ensure that emergency operating records critical to the continuity of essential USAID activities during a national emergency are available at the Emergency Relocation Site (ERS) in the event the site is activated during a national emergency;
- To safeguard rights and interests records essential to the preservation of the legal rights and interests of individual U.S. citizens, and the Federal Government, including those records that limit or prohibit disclosure;
- To ensure that vital records are evaluated on the basis of whether they are essential in the conduct of emergency operations or in the protection of the rights and interests of citizens, and the Federal Government;
- To ensure that the records are adequate to carry out the Agency's critical functions and are available for use by individuals other than those who would generally use them;
- To ensure that records are easily retrievable and that they are maintained in usable condition;
- To ensure that the current inventory of records located at the relocation site is readily accessible; and
- To inform Agency personnel of their responsibilities under the Vital Records Program.

511.2 PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective Date: 12/19/2005

a. The **Director, Bureau for Management, Office of Administrative Services (M/AS/OD)** has overall responsibility to develop and implement an Agency-wide program for management of the Agency's Vital Records Program.

b. The **USAID Vital Records Officer (VRO), Bureau for Management, Office of Administrative Services, Information and Records Division (M/AS/IRD)** is responsible for the overall management of the Agency's Vital Records Program.

c. The **Bureau for Management, Office of Information and Resources Management (M/IRM)** is responsible for maintaining computer operations at the Emergency Relocation Site (ERS), including access to the network drives that contain electronic vital records, and computer equipment for use by COOP officials.

d. **Emergency Operating Offices** are those offices that immediately mobilize in the event that a COOP is activated. They are responsible for having organized and sufficient data to continue operating in an emergency for a maximum of 30 days.

e. **Rights and Interests Offices** are those offices responsible for records required to reestablish the Agency and protect the legal and financial interests of the Agency after an emergency. They are responsible for having organized and sufficient data to assist in rebuilding the Agency while protecting the legal rights and interest of the Agency, its employees, and the Federal Government.

f. **Bureau and Office Records Liaison Officers (RLO), and USAID Mission Communications and Records (C&R) Supervisors** are responsible for coordinating the completion and submission of the annual Vital Records Report, including the submission of any updates to the USAID Vital Records Officer. RLOs and C&R Supervisors are also referred to as Vital Records Liaison Officers (VRLO).

511.3 POLICY DIRECTIVES AND REQUIRED PROCEDURES

Effective Date: 12/19/2005

Vital records are records that are essential to the continuity of USAID critical activities under national emergency conditions. Only the most recent and complete source of the critical information is treated as vital records. Vital records are divided into the following two categories:

a. Emergency Operating Records: Records vital to the critical functions of the Federal Government for the duration of an emergency. They are the records necessary to mobilize and protect material and manpower resources, services, and systems, and to perform critical functions.

Emergency Operating Records are divided into two groups

(1) **Emergency Operating Records – Group 1:** Records that define the basic organization, its employees, directives, regulations, and emergency procedures, for example, the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) and Information Systems Security Continuity of Operations Plan (ISS COOP).

(2) **Emergency Operating Records – Group 2:** Records that show the current status of USAID program and administrative critical functions. Examples of these records include the critical functions of offices, emergency operating plans, emergency contact lists of employees, contractors, business contacts, lists of active procurements, programs, and activities.

b. Rights and Interests Records: Records that are essential to preserve the legal rights and interests of individual citizens and the Federal Government. Examples of these records include personnel security files, official personnel files, contracts, and vouchers.

511.3.1 Emergency Operating Offices

Effective Date: 12/19/2005

Emergency Operating Offices are those offices that immediately mobilize in the event that a COOP is activated. They must have organized and sufficient data to continue operating in an emergency for a maximum of 30 days. They must identify the most critical functions of their offices and provide the records required to support these functions. In addition, the Emergency Operating Offices work closely with M/IRM to ensure that the appropriate system access and equipment requirements have been submitted, and that the most current vital records have either been updated on the appropriate system drive, if electronic, or provided in hard copy to the USAID Vital Records Officer in M/AS/IRD.

511.3.1.1 Emergency Operating Offices in USAID/W

Effective Date: 12/19/2005

- a.** The following are designated Emergency Operating Offices in USAID/W:
- (1) Office of the Administrator (A/AID);
 - (2) Executive Secretariat (ES);
 - (3) Office of Security (SEC);
 - (4) Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA);
 - (5) Bureau for Management, Office of Assistant Administrator (AA/M);
 - (6) Bureau for Management, Office of Overseas Management Support (M/OMS);
 - (7) Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs, Press Relations (LPA/PR);
 - (8) Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs, Congressional Liaison Division (LPA/CL);

- (9) Bureau for Africa (AFR);
- (10) Bureau for Asia and the Near East (ANE);
- (11) Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC);
- (12) Bureau for Europe and Eurasia (E&E); and
- (13) Bureau for Management, Office of Information Resources Management (M/IRM).

b. USAID/W Emergency Operating Offices must designate a Vital Records Liaison Officer (VRLO) and notify, via e-mail (cstaples@usaid.gov), the USAID Vital Records Officer located in M/AS/IRD. The VRLO must provide the USAID Vital Records Officer with the Vital Records Report by April 30th of each fiscal year that includes

- (1) **A completed Transmittal of Vital Records for Safe Storage, [AID 5-85](#),** which must accompany each office's records to be sent to the ERS or another offsite records storage facility for safe storage.
- (2) **A completed Inventory of Emergency Operating Records, [AID 5-84](#),** identified by offices, which lists the vital records needed immediately in an emergency situation. These records must support the bureau/office's most critical functions in the first 12-48 hours. Copies of records (except for electronic versions) identified on the form must be included in the submission.
- (3) The electronic records must be stored in the bureau/office folder located in the agency network Vital Records (V-drive), Public (P-drive) or other system drive, disk, CD, or database designated for these records.
- (4) Both forms must be submitted when revisions are made to previous reports.

Forward the report, along with any hard copies of vital records, to the M/AS/IRD Records Depository, Room B2.6C, Ronald Reagan Building (RRB), 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20523-2701, c/o USAID Vital Records Officer. The vital records will be boxed, labeled, and transferred to either the ERS or another records storage facility.

511.3.1.2 Emergency Operating Offices in Missions

Effective Date: 12/19/2005

- a. All USAID Missions are designated Emergency Operating Offices.
- b. USAID Mission Emergency Operating Offices must designate a Communications and Records (C&R) Supervisor and notify, via e-mail (cstaples@usaid.gov), the USAID Vital Records Officer in M/AS/IRD. The C&R Supervisors must submit the Vital Records Report by April 30th of each fiscal year that includes
 - (1) A completed **Transmittal of Vital Records for Safe Storage**, [AID 5-85](#), which must accompany each office's records to be sent to the mission's local offsite storage location for safekeeping.
 - (2) A completed **Inventory of Emergency Operating Records**, [AID 5-84](#), identified by offices, that lists the vital records needed immediately in an emergency situation. These records must support the mission's most critical functions in the first 12-48 hours.
 - (3) The electronic records must be stored in the mission's office folder located in the agency network Vital Records (V-drive), Public (P-drive), or other system drive, disk, CD or database designated for these records.
 - (4) Both forms must be submitted when revisions are made to previous reports.

Forward the report to the M/AS/IRD Records Depository, Room B2.6C, Ronald Reagan Building (RRB), 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20523-2701, c/o USAID Vital Records Officer. The hard copies of vital records must be stored at the mission's local offsite storage facility for safekeeping. Electronic records must be stored on the mission's Vital Records (V-drive), Public (P-drive), or other system drive, disk, CD or database designated for these records.

511.3.2 Rights and Interests Offices

Effective Date: 12/19/2005

Rights and Interests Offices are those offices responsible for records required to reestablish the Agency and protect the legal and financial interests of the Agency after an emergency. They must provide organized and sufficient data to assist in rebuilding the Agency, while protecting the legal rights and interest of its employees and the Federal Government. Data includes the identification of the most critical functions of its offices and the records required to support these functions. In addition, the Rights and Interests Offices must work closely with M/IRM to ensure that the appropriate system access and equipment requirements have been submitted and that the most current vital records have either been updated on the appropriate system drive, if electronic, or provided in hard copy to the USAID Vital Records Officer in M/AS/IRD.

511.3.2.1 Rights and Interests Offices in USAID/W

Effective Date: 12/19/2005

- a. The following offices are designated Rights and Interests Offices in USAID/W:
- (1) Office of the General Counsel, Assistant General Counsel for Litigation and Enforcement (GC/LE);
 - (2) Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade (EGAT);
 - (3) Bureau for Global Health (GH);
 - (4) Bureau for Management, Office of Human Resources (M/HR);
 - (5) Bureau for Management, Office of the Chief Financial Management Officer (M/FM);
 - (6) Office of Inspector General (OIG); and
 - (7) Bureau for Management, Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA).
- b. Each of the offices in 511.3.2.1a., must designate a VRLO and notify, via e-mail (cstaples@usaid.gov), the USAID Vital Records Officer in M/AS/IRD. The VRLO must submit the Vital Records Report by April 30th of each fiscal year that includes
- (1) A completed **Transmittal of Vital Records for Safe Storage**, [AID 5-85](#), which must accompany each bureau/office's records to be sent for safe storage.
 - (2) A completed **Inventory of Rights and Interest Records**, [AID 5-86](#), identified by bureaus/offices that are required to preserve the rights and interests of U.S. citizens, USAID employees, and the Federal Government, including those that limit or prohibit disclosure.
 - (3) The electronic records must be stored in the bureau/office folder located in the agency network Vital Records (V-drive), Public (P-drive), or other system drive, disk, CD or database designated for these records.
 - (4) Both forms must be submitted when revisions are made to previous reports.

Forward the report, along with any hard copies of vital records, to the M/AS/IRD Records Depository, Room B2.6C, Ronald Reagan Building (RRB) 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20523-2701, c/o USAID Vital Records Officer. The vital records will be boxed, labeled, and transferred to either the ERS or another offsite records storage facility.

511.3.2.2 Rights and Interests Offices in Missions

Effective Date: 12/19/2005

a. The following offices are designated Rights and Interests Offices in Missions:

- (1) Offices with Strategic Objectives (SO);
- (2) The Controller;
- (3) The Regional Legal Advisor (RLA);
- (4) The Executive Office; and
- (5) The Contracting Office or Regional Contracting Office.

b. Each of the offices listed above must designate a Correspondence and Records Supervisor (C&RS) and notify, via e-mail (cstaples@usaid.gov), the Vital Records Officer in M/AS/IRD. The C&R Supervisor must submit the Vital Records Report Package by April 30th of each fiscal year that includes the following:

- (1) **A completed Transmittal of Vital Records for Safe Storage, [AID 5-85](#)**, which must accompany each bureau/office's records to be sent to the mission's local offsite storage location for safekeeping.
- (2) **Inventory of Rights and Interest Records, [AID 5-86](#)**, identified by bureaus/offices that are required to preserve the rights and interests of U.S. citizens, USAID employees, and the Federal Government, including those that limit or prohibit disclosure.
- (3) The electronic records must be stored in the mission's office folder located in the agency network Vital Records (V-drive), Public (P-drive), or other system drive, disk, CD or database designated for these records.
- (4) Both forms must be submitted when revisions are made to previous reports.

Forward the report to the M/AS/IRD Records Depository, Room B2.6C, Ronald Reagan Building (RRB), 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20523-2701, c/o USAID Vital Records Officer. The records must be stored at the mission's local offsite storage facility for safekeeping. Electronic records must be stored on the mission's Vital Records (V-drive), Public (P-drive) or other system drive, disk, CD or database designated for these records.

511.3.3 Disaster Recovery Plans

Effective Date: 12/19/2005

M/IRM assists system users in developing a disaster recovery plan. A disaster recovery plan must address how to recover or restore loss of service or data processing installations, and must include a listing of the organizational units' electronic vital records and any other electronic systems necessary to support the units' critical functions. This includes any systems that have been reported to M/IRM as being needed at the relocation COOP site. A copy of the disaster recovery plan must be provided to the USAID Vital Records Officer. See [ADS 545.3.2.2](#)

a. M/IRM also

- (1) Identifies the processing requirements necessary to support electronic vital records and alternate methods and procedures (i.e., suspending processing, using manual or personal computer procedures, or processing on a backup computer);
- (2) Maintains a list of offices with approved disaster recovery plans; and
- (3) Ensures that electronic retrieval procedures for electronic vital records require only routine effort to locate needed information (as defined by the application system owners), especially since individuals unfamiliar with the records may need to use them during an emergency or disaster.

b. The System User

- (1) Ensures that all electronic vital records systems, whether emergency operating or Rights and Interest-related, are reported to M/IRM for transfer or duplication for the ERS. M/IRM only accepts electronic systems that support critical functions. Other systems will be accepted at the discretion of M/IRM.
- (2) Ensures that the electronic vital records are current and updated at appropriate intervals as indicated on the vital records forms (i.e., weekly, monthly, quarterly) in relation to the purpose they serve.
- (3) Ensures that instructions, as defined by the system owner, required to operate the system and access the records are available at the Emergency Relocation Site.

511.3.4 Examples of Vital Records

Effective Date: 12/19/2005

511.3.4.1 Emergency Operating Records

Effective Date: 12/19/2005

- Delegation of Authority
- Emergency Action Plan
- Emergency Personnel Contact List
- International Agreement
- Personnel Management System – Mission staffing
- Safe Haven Checklist
- Site and Floor Plans

511.3.4.2 Inventory of Rights and Interest Records

Effective Date: 12/19/2005

- Accountable officer records – paper and electronic
- Accounting administrative records – paper and electronic
- AETA reports and supporting documents
- Appropriation allotment records – paper and electronic
- Budget reports – paper and electronic
- Case records by employee name
- Damage and Loss Reports
- Foreign country customs records – paper and electronic
- Freight records
- Financial Systems (NMS, Phoenix, A&A on the Web)
- GAO Exceptions Files
- General Ledger accounting records – paper and electronic
- Grievance, disciplinary and adverse action records
- Housing Furnishing Accountability Files – paper and electronic
- Leases on housing and other properties
- Mission Directives (Notices, Orders)
- Motor Vehicle Files
- Nonexpendable Personal Property Files – paper and automated
- Participant Training Files
- Passenger transportation records
- Payroll records – paper and electronic

- Personnel Management System – Mission staffing – paper and electronic
- Personnel Records
- Procurement records – paper and electronic
- Project/Strategic Objective files
- Regional Audit Report Files
- Registration books and insurance documents for official vehicles
- Tax records –paper and electronic
- Vouchers - paper and electronic

511.4 MANDATORY REFERENCES

Effective Date: 12/19/2005

511.4.1 External Mandatory References

Effective Date: 12/19/2005

- a. [Executive Order 12656, Assignment of Emergency Preparedness Responsibilities, November 18, 1988.](#)
- b. [36 CFR 1236, Management of Vital Records](#)
- c. [Vital Records and Records Disaster Mitigation and Recovery: An Instructional Guide](#)
- *d. [FEMA Federal Preparedness Circular \(FPC\) 65](#)

511.4.2 Internal Mandatory References

Effective Date: 12/19/2005

- a. [ADS 530, Emergency Planning Overseas](#)
- b. [ADS 531, Continuity of Operations Program](#)
- c. [ADS 545, Information Systems Security](#)

511.4.3 Mandatory Forms

Effective Date: 12/19/2005

- a. [AID 5-84, Inventory of Emergency Operating Records](#)
- b. [AID 5-85, Transmittal of Vital Records for Safe Storage](#)
- c. [AID 5-86, Inventory of Rights and Interest Records](#)

* An asterisk indicates that the adjacent material is new or substantively revised.

511.5 ADDITIONAL HELP
Effective Date: 12/19/2005

a. [Most Frequently Asked Questions](#)

511.6 DEFINITIONS
Effective Date: 12/19/2005

Contingency

A possible event that must be prepared for such as an emergency. (Chapter [502](#), [511](#))

Contingency plan

A written plan of actions to be taken to safeguard assets and provide reasonable continuity of support should normal operations be disrupted due to the occurrence of an emergency situation or other undesirable event. (Chapters [511](#), [562](#), [563](#))

Contingency Planning

Instituting policies and essential procedures to mitigate the effects of potential emergencies or disasters on an agency's operations and records. (Chapter [502](#), [511](#))

Continuity

To go on with selected USAID programs in an actual state of contingency operating conditions. (Chapter [502](#), [511](#))

Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

A contingency action plan which provides the capability for a Department or Agency to continue operations during a crisis which renders the organization's headquarters unusable. (Chapter [511](#), [531](#))

Cycling (Cycle)

The periodic removal of obsolete copies of vital records and their placements with copies of current vital records. This may occur daily, weekly, quarterly annually, or at other designated intervals. Update. (Chapter [502](#), [511](#))

Disaster

An unexpected occurrence, manmade or natural, that causes loss of life, health, property or livelihood, inflicting widespread destruction and distress and having long-term, adverse effects on Agency operations. It is distinguished from an accident by its magnitude and by its damage to the community infrastructure or the resources required for recovery. (Chapters [502](#), [511](#), [530](#))

Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP)

The document that defines the resources, actions, tasks and data required for managing the business recovery process in the event of a business interruption. The plan is designed to assist in restoring the business process within the stated disaster recovery goal (Chapter [511](#))

Emergency

A situation or an occurrence of a serious nature, developing suddenly and unexpectedly, and demanding immediate action. This is generally a short duration, for example, an interruption of normal Agency operations for a week or less. It may involve electrical failure or minor flooding caused by broken pipes. (Chapter [502](#), [511](#))

Emergency Operating Records

The type of vital records essential to the continued functioning or reconstitution of an organization during and after an emergency. (Chapter [502](#), [511](#))

Emergency Relocation Site (ERS)

The site containing the Agency's emergency operating facility. Executive Order 12656 requires all Federal Departments and Agencies to establish plans, programs, equipment and facilities to ensure the continuity of essential functions. (Chapter [511](#), [531](#))

Recovery

To restore USAID programs/activities from a contingency state to their usual state under normal operating conditions (the rebuilding phase). (Chapter [502](#), [511](#))

Rights and Interest Records

Records essential to the preservation of the legal rights and interests of individual citizens and the Federal Government. Examples are legal proceedings, payroll, and retirement records. (Chapter [502](#), [511](#))

Safehaven

An approved site where vital records are stored for safekeeping and retrieval in cases of emergency and/or disaster. This site has to be at a location that is separate from where the files originated. (Chapter [502](#), [511](#))

Vital Records

Essential Agency records that are needed to meet operational responsibilities and to protect the legal and financial rights of the Government and those affected by Government activities during a national security emergency or disaster. (Chapter [502](#), [511](#))

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